

Thunderstorms in Alabama

Thunderstorms are a common occurrence in Alabama. Although they can strike at any time, thunderstorms are more frequent during the warm season in the spring, summer, and early fall months. Tornadoes, lightning, damaging winds, hail, and flooding are the main hazards from thunderstorms.

The best defense against thunderstorms is to stay inside a substantial building. Thunderstorms do not usually last for a long time and will generally pass in less than an hour. When thunderstorms are expected, be sure to pick up loose objects around your home or business. Small items can become deadly missiles in strong wind, and flying debris can cause serious damage to other property.



Severe Thunderstorm Criteria

*Wind at or
above 58 mph*

Severe Thunderstorms

A severe thunderstorm is defined as a thunderstorm producing winds at or above 58 mph, and/or penny size hail (3/4 of an inch in diameter) or larger. Severe thunderstorm winds can gust to more than 80 mph, overturning trailers, unroofing homes, and toppling trees and power lines. While penny size hail denotes a severe thunderstorm, hail as large as grapefruit has occurred. The danger of serious injury or death from hail is not hard to imagine when you consider that a good-sized hailstone may fall at speeds reaching 110 mph.

Severe thunderstorms can strike any time of year and are most frequent in the spring months of March, April, and May. Alabama also has a "secondary" severe weather season in November and early December. Severe thunderstorms that develop on a summer day are usually isolated. However, some of the most dangerous and intense lightning may occur with summer thunderstorms. This is a fact well worth our attention since summer is the time of the year when outdoor activities are at a maximum.



*Penny Size Hail
(3/4 of an inch in
diameter or larger)*

